

# **REPORT ON PROF HALIM ALI VISIT TO THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**

**25 – 30 September 2013**

## **Introduction**

This was to be the third final official visit by Professor Abdul Halim Ali as an adjunct professor to the Faculty of Social Science before his terms ended in 30 September 2013. The Department of Anthropology and Sociology (ANSOS) was the organiser of the programme. All the events planned were open to all members in the faculty and across all departments and academic programmes.

## **Objective**

For the second visit, there were two main objectives identified. The first objective was to continue on the agenda for capacity building among the young academics. The second objective was to provide academic training for students and staff through lecture, seminar and reading circles.

## **Programme**

There were three streams of activities addressed the general interest of colleagues and students in the social sciences. There were:

- **SEMINAR: DISCOURSE ON COLONIALISM**

25 September 2013, 10.00 - 4.30 pm

This was a much anticipated 1-day seminar as it assembled the senior professors and younger academics in the presenter's line-up. The presenters were:

1. Professor Abdul Halim Ali "Review on Hussein Alatas' Stamford Raffles Schemer or Reformer and Intellectual Imperialism".
2. Professor Abdul Rashid Abdullah "Colonialism in Shoestring: Some enduring anthropological legacies of Brooke's policies".
3. Kelvin Egay "Colonial Adventure and Anthropological Afterthought"
4. Sharifah Sophia "Museum and Knowledge as Mythic Discourse"

The seminar was well-attended and the audience were treated with a spectre of competing paradigms about colonialism from Marxist, functionalist, middle-range position and post-colonialist. It was an intellectually fulfilling and vibrant discussion for the audience and the speakers. It is suggested that seminar of such nature to be conducted again in the future programme of the faculty.

- **READING CIRCLE**

26 September 2013, 2 – 3.30 pm

The latest book by Guy Standing, *The Precariat* (2011) was discussed by in the event. The author argued that there is an emerging new class exists in the current economic situation. They are highly skilled, very mobile and earned good income from their expertise. However, unlike the conventional workers, they do not have a permanent working place, they do not have working colleagues and they do not require stability in terms of long-term contract and protection from labour exploitation. This made them a “new dangerous class” who has no loyalty to a particular place, cause and colleagues. There was discussion among the participants if the precariat was indeed a class or not. Although there was a divided opinion on the question, everyone agreed that the author had at least described an emerging scenario in global economy that may soon give rise to a new phenomenon yet to be known.

- **WRITING DISCUSSION**

27 September 2013, 2 – 4.30 pm

The discussion aimed at proposing a **second** edited volume of essays comprises of young and early-career academics in the faculty. During the meeting, a number of decisions have been made:

1. Book editors: Dr Kamsiah Ali & Sharifah Sophia
2. Theme: Sarawak society, culture, history, social institution, social issues
3. Due to be published: November 2014
4. Expected number of contribution: 8 essays

- **GUEST LECTURE for SSF 1083 Gender Ethnicity and Class**

30 October 2013, 10-12 pm, 4-6 pm

A lecture for first year student on the topic ‘class system’ was delivered by Prof Halim as part of his duties as an adjunct professor. The student was taught on the history of class system as part of universal social phenomena. The discussion on “class” was discussed from economic, social and historical vantages. The discussion was interactive and students were encouraged to identify their class position and their view on that. There were around 350 students attended the lecture and gave positive response to the questions raised by the guest Professor.

## **Recommendation**

The organiser has received several feedbacks from the guest and the participants about the programme. While the responses from the colleagues and students in the faculty were overall positive, supportive and encouraging, there are areas that needed attention. They are summarised as follow:

1. The number of activities planned for the third visit was restricted due to limited source of funds. However, it has succeeded in organising a successful one-day seminar that has received good turnout and responses from the participants. It was suggested that another seminar could be replicated in the future for consideration.
2. The call for a continuation of adjunct professor visit due to the rising number of young academics in the faculty and those who had just returned from their graduate studies.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, Prof Halim third visit to the faculty was a success. The attendance to the programme was very well indeed despite being held during teaching week. Colleagues across departments came and lend their support for the activities. It is hoped that another adjunct professor programme can be initiated again in the future given the need and demands for training and mentoring among the academics, especially the younger generation.

Signed by the Head of Anthropology and Sociology Department (ANSOS)